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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceived role and performance of online learning, related faculty concerns and training, administrative/institutional issues, student attitudes and performance, and instructional design. Thirty-nine Midwestern community college employees (33 faculty and 6 administration/staff members) and 48 students participated in the survey. The open-ended questions were based upon areas of faculty, administrative, and student concerns. Results indicated that: (1) personal interest and perceived need on the part of faculty played a major role in online course development; (2) faculty and staff seemed to have sufficient technological and pedagogical support available to them; (3) overload or reassignment time was used to pay faculty for the development of online courses; however, in some cases, faculty were not compensated for this development; (4) there seemed to be little pressure to develop online courses; (5) faculty viewed the use of multimedia in online courses negatively; (6) faculty members who preferred teaching online to teaching in the classroom represented only 15% of respondents; (7) 17 students (35%) preferred classroom learning; (8) many students indicated that they were not prepared to take online courses; and (9) faculty and administration were concerned about screening prospective online students, the quality of online courses, and testing integrity. The author indicates that a follow-up study is going to be developed. (Contains 40 references and 14 tables.) (EMH)

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Love It, Hate It, Or Don't Care: Views on Online Learning

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Love it, Hate it, or Don't Care: Views on Online Learning

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Abstract

The expansion of online courses has raised concern among faculty, administrators, students, and support staff. The rush for involvement in this medium has taken place without taking time to examine pedagogical and instructional design issues. In addition, some institutions deal with the cost of providing this alternative format of instruction. Administrators need to examine issues of faculty compensation, reassignment time, and class size for the alternative learning format. In addition, faculty must work with support staff to develop resources that are pedagogically sound and engaging to those being served, the students. Finally, students show that they would take additional online courses, and they were split on whether they thought they learned more online.

The current development of online course offerings has progressed in a similar fashion to this country's westward expansion during the 19th century, happening at a rapid pace without regard to all of the consequences being examined. This is especially troubling since there are many more casualties (e.g., withdrawn and failing students) than with those traditional methods (Bathe, 2001). With caution and examination of the processes at the administrative and faculty levels as well as the impact on students, the opportunity to avoid pitfalls and maximize the success and learning of students can exist.

Researching this area is of significance due to my direct involvement in the development of resources for these courses as well as teaching in the online environment. After anecdotal self-examination of alternative learning at area community colleges, I determined that the following areas should be examined: the perceived role and performance of online learning, faculty concerns and training; administrative/institutional issues; student attitudes and performance; and instructional design. Each of these areas is important as they intertwine and shape the ability for this or any course delivery method to succeed. In addition, by examining these factors, it is hoped that over time, a model for the development and implementation of online courses can be developed.

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Getting Started

Examination of resources that were familiar to me gave a good starting point for this paper. An examination of resources prepared by the League for Innovation in the Community College, the writings of Mark Milliron and Cindy Miles, and resources provided through the Illinois Online Network (e.g., Guessoum, 2000; Pitt & Clark, 1997) provided some of the framework. Following the examination of those sources, key terms (e.g., technology, innovation, and instructional design) were searched using online databases, such as ERIC. These searches yielded several hundred resources. This in part was due to the number of resources involving other forms of alternative learning (e.g., correspondence; interactive television; and open learning) that were presented.

After this initial search, an examination of the literature was narrowed to the past six years. In addition, the focus of the search was narrowed to those issues related to online instruction and the use of multimedia. By doing this, I hoped that the focus would be kept on the current online trend, avoiding unrelated literature.

Findings

Perceived Role/Issues of Online Learning

What is online learning. Kerka (1996) reported, "learning at a distance can be both isolating and highly interactive" (p. 2). In addition, online courses can provide opportunity for collaboration, leading to the expansion of social skills. A major concern is the lack of non-verbal cues; Kerka (1996) reported that the development of communication guidelines could assist in developing positive class relationships.

Despite all of the media hype and discussion, Milliron and Miles (1999) reported that the Internet has not changed what works in education; instead it has enabled those concepts further. In fact, there is a misconception that innovators are championing any specific technology. According to Milliron (1999) it is about applying the tools to improve and expand learning opportunities.

Use of the technology. The use of technology has been expanding in recent years. According to Green (2000) and The Campus Computing Study (CCS) more than 55% of courses use e-mail as a communication tool. The CCS study also showed that more than 40% of courses utilize Internet resources (e.g., web-enhanced and online). Also supporting this upward movement, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) reported that 78% of colleges studied offer at least one distance education course (Striplin, 2000). Finally, the CSCC reported that the highest percentage of distance education courses were in the social sciences with the lowest percentages being in the biological sciences and foreign languages.

One reason for the increase is the potential uses. Black (1998) discussed that online learning can provide for asynchronous collaborative learning, self-paced learning, as well as synchronous communication.

However, with the use of technology there is a cost. Kilian (1997) reported that it is not cheaper or easier to teach online, that it is not for everyone, that is does not provide for the nonverbal communication that some faculty see as essential. Also, online education is changing the role of faculty.

Rushing into the medium. Since there are few theoretical frameworks for online instruction, the transferring of established theories and models need to be utilized (Pitt & Clark, 1997). Then there is a need to examine whether these strategies are meeting the goal of the faculty and students.

With the rush to be involved in online instruction, people are hired and technology is rolled out without taking much time for training (Milliron, 1999). In addition, Roe (2001) reported that faculty are concerned about administrative pressure to incorporate technology in their courses.

Digital divide. de los Santos and de los Santos (2000) argues that community college students must be able to evaluate critically the mass of information that is available. A National Telecommunications and Information Administration report shines poorly on the ability of this happening as they report that over 75% of households with incomes over $75,000 have at least one computer, compared to less than 32% of households with incomes between $25,000 and $35,000. To further add to the problem, those with lower income have even less access.

In addition, Guessoum (2000) reported that the digital divide in the United States is still growing. This is supported by the fact that in households earning between $15,000 and $35,000 a year, 32% of whites owned computers while only 19% of blacks and Hispanics did so. This margin had grown 8% over a five-year span, showing the continuation of the problem.

Direction of online learning. Lever-Duffy (2000) discussed that the future of distance education should not be considered an innovative, unusual, or segregated approach but one that is commonplace. Lever-Duffy (2000) reported that distance education will become a source of educational opportunity across all borders, however in what shape is still to be seen.

Faculty Issues

Role of faculty. Myen et al. (1999) reported on the differences between traditional and online modes of instruction. The instructor is still the content expert in the online model, however, unless the instructor is also technically skilled, there is a need for

assistance by others. So, no matter the quality of the content and design, course materials cannot be delivered online without the technology. This can be problematic for some faculty since working with someone outside of their discipline can be seen as a challenging experience, since they are not in the role of expert.

In preparation to teach online, Gellman-Danley (2000) reported that there is a need for faculty to meet six competency levels. This included the ability to utilize e-mail, send attachments, knowing presentation software, and having taught in a technology-assisted class. According to Gellman-Danley (2000) requiring faculty to have such abilities would assist in assuring competency in tools that are available as well as experience in utilizing them in the classroom.

Faculty should establish goals to assist in achieving a quality course (Myen et al., 1999) including achieving a functional delivery system that is accessible, utilizing stable technology, and producing content that is effectively designed. Another factor that many faculty overlook is the need to develop a supportive relationship with instructional designers and support staff. Myen et al. (1999) report that both groups are dependent on the experience of each other to complete a quality product.

In the quest to produce a quality product, Inman et al. (1999) provided several suggestions with regards to alternative learning. These include making sure that faculty are provided with student feedback through summative and formative evaluations to assist in further revisions of the material/course. Good teachers need to be open to making changes to their materials based upon student feedback (Kimball, 1998). Having these new technologies available makes this easier.

Student interaction/Discussions. There are four potential roles that faculty can adopt in their interaction with students (Lewis & Hunt, 1999). These roles include a "manipulative approach" where students receive constant feedback and (the editor); an active role where students are prompted into participation (the prompter); one where the instructor sets the parameters, intervenes to direct action and responds in a very supportive manner to comments (the game show host); or the producer which involves aspects such as the structure of the discussion, whether responses are moderated by the instructor, and the social constraints of the area.

Berge and Muilenburg (2000) reported that to promote discussion, there are several factors that faculty need to address. Since non-verbal cues are lacking, there is a need to make sure that the prompts that are used to facilitate discussion are clearly stated. Also, instructors need to realize that by posting a long, well-articulated message, the potential for discussion being stifled exists. Finally, Berge and Muilenburg (2000) reported that instructors need to establish policies of netiquette and respect for the cultural

differences of students. By doing this, students are more likely to have a positive course experience.

Faculty Concerns. Inadequate compensation is a major barrier to faculty interest in adopting new technologies (Allison & Scott, 1998). In addition, it was reported that some faculty do not see the need to utilize non-traditional approaches because they are deemed as fads and inferior in nature. As the role of faculty changes due to the utilization of this technology, the way that faculty workload and compensation are computed needs to be re-examined.

Stocker (2001) argued that the impact on students and the loss of the human relations are among the concerns that faculty have about using technology. In addition, time constraints and that they enjoy teaching in traditional methods are other factors inhibiting faculty from participation (Betts, 1998). Additional interest would be generated if there were more information available about the format, and if there were ample training opportunities. Finally, financial incentives and release time were deemed essential to encouraging faculty participation.

Satisfaction via online. Betts (1998) reported the reasons that faculty are satisfied with distance education: a) they are able to reach new audiences; b) they are provided the opportunity to develop new ideas; and c) they are personally motivated to use the technology. In addition, faculty saw this as an intellectual challenge and used it to improve job satisfaction.

Inman et al. (1999) reported that the more experience an instructor has in the traditional classroom, the less initial satisfaction that they would have beginning an alternative format. Despite negative attitudes about the format, this is a means of delivery which most students are satisfied. Finally, Betts (1998) reported that there are concerns with the quality of education that was being presented in the format as well as the benefits that were gained for the cost.

Administrative Issues

Costs. The cost has been reported as being an important factor in alternative delivery formats. For example, Ringle (2000) argued that if administrators are unable to have a good understanding of the costs and benefits of the technology, they are dependent on the arguments of those who will present the loudest arguments, pieces displayed in the media, and wisdom from peers that might not be any better off.

Administrators need to examine what faculty members are expected to be able to complete with regards to the technology (Allison & Scott, 1998). In addition, administrators need to consider how faculty course preparations be treated as the expectations of faculty are being expanded. Also, administrators need to make available

more incentives for faculty and provide information about the benefits of the format (Betts, 1998). Finally, administration needs to encourage those faculty involved with distance education to promote the format and be supportive of others started in the effort.

While there have been concerns about the costs, Berg (2000) reported that 89.96% of distance learning programs are profitable. While the majority of these programs are making less than 30% profit (60.87%), there are an equal number of programs (13.04% each) that are making profits between 31% and 50% and greater than 50%.

The Changing Environment. Milliron and Miles (2000) reported that community college presidents are realizing the role that distance education and technology are playing in today's community college. For example, the president's surveyed believed that the trend toward information technology will continue (96%). In addition, it was thought that training faculty to use information technology will be an essential part of staff development (95%), and the cost of obtaining and maintaining technology will be key with governing boards (87%).

Reports show that there were going to be more students than ever before (McClenney, 1998). In addition, these students are more consumer-based, wanting quality and maximum access to information. With this new attitude, there has been a massive growth in the for-profit institutions, such as the University of Phoenix. Institutions such as this place a focus on the customer-service and have become driven in providing anytime-any place educational opportunities.

Ehrmann (1998) identified several key issues that community college leaders need to be concerned with. These include the stability and longevity of the technology, the breadth of the technology investment and the focus on the developing of a few courses or spreading resources across disciplines. In trying to address these pressures, the British Open University is replacing labor with capital (e.g., technological aids) and utilizing tutors to teach courses (Berg, 2000). Factors tied to this include making instruction more efficient and adding more students to existing courses.

Inman et al. (1999) reports that because distance learning requires faculty to learn a new role, administrators need to provide the tools, training, and time to handle these duties. McClenney (1998) discussed the failure of innovations with regards to transforming education. Examples of innovations falling short are seen when they are chosen as a symbol over substance and when they focus on everything except learning.

Student Issues

Performance. Research has shown that students perform as well or better in courses that are multimedia-based as classroom-based in lower-division university courses (e.g., Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Erwin & Reippi, 1999; and Hurlburt, 2001). Erwin

and Reippi (1999) showed that students in three different courses (abnormal, human development, and statistics) performed better when utilizing multimedia than those that took the same course in a non-enhanced format. Similar findings were supported by research conducted by Daugherty and Funke (1998) and Jonassen et al. (1999). In addition, Erwin and Reippi (1999) suggested that learning styles were independent of their performance in courses that use multimedia.

Hurlburt (2001) discussed the use of lectlets, which are short web-streamed audio lectures with synchronized video, as a delivery tool in introductory statistics classes. Hurlburt reported that these lectlets provided several advantages over traditional lecture: they provided better review preceding material; students had more control; students were allowed opportunities to revisit lectlets; and they could lead to the development of independent learning skills. Despite the advantages, Hurlburt reported that students thought that the traditional course was a better experience.

Hurlburt's view is supported by other studies. For example, Davies and Mendenhall (1998) reported that 57% of students who participated in online lessons preferred the classroom experience. This was due to the social aspects of the class or due to better ability to remember materials that were presented orally. Those students who preferred the online experience stated that flexibility was a key component.

The student's ability to succeed is not just limited to the structure of the class. "Community colleges must be mindful that student success is predicated on the availability of support services such as counseling, assessment, study skills, and libraries" (California Community Colleges, 1999, p. 8). This can only be achieved by working to obtain nigh quality and accountability in their programs.

Issues impacting student success. Fredericksen, Pelz, and Swan (2000) reported that interaction with the instructor is the most significant contributor to student's perception of learning. Fredericksen et al. (2000) discussed that students who had high levels of satisfaction with the help desk had higher levels of success than those who lower satisfaction.

Why a student is in the course is another important factor for student success. Students who were taking the course because they could not get into classroom sections reported significantly lower levels of learning when compared to those who took the course because of personal responsibilities (Fredericksen et al., 2000). In addition, students who felt the courses were beneficial due to the flexibility performed better than those who were in the class due to no other options.

Instructional Design and Training

Instructional design. Kirby (1999) discussed the importance of interaction in online courses and described three modes of interaction that occur. According to Kirby, the learner-learner interaction occurs after interaction with content and would be spontaneous through the bulletin board discussions or via synchronous chats in preparation for course debates. The learner-instructor interaction occurs throughout the course. This can be seen in the asynchronous discussions as well as facilitation of synchronous chat session. Finally, the learner-content interaction can be done through materials being presented online via text and video. In addition, this interaction is tied significantly to the other two models as materials are presented through both other learners and the instructor.

Kimball (1998) reported that distance learners could have a harder time than those in the traditional classroom due to integrating the course components into a concise whole. In addition to instructor feedback and interaction, instructional design factors such as flexible course structure and effective visual layouts influence student participation and satisfaction (McLoughlin, 1999).

Training. The importance of workshops providing hands-on opportunities was emphasized so skills could be learned over abstract concepts. This supports the 1997 President's Commission of Advisors on Science and Technology calling for technology being basic to teacher education (Thurston et al., 1998).

Thurston et al. (1998) discussed the importance of conducting needs assessments to make sure that workshops were serving the needs of the faculty. Everett (1998) found that instructors must have training that focuses on the apprehension and fears that students exhibit during the early stages of taking an alternative learning course. One way of addressing this is have a back-up plan if the technology fails. In addition, instructors need to apply a wide range of teaching methods in this environment (e.g., discussions and group activities) to be able to provide quality instruction.

Purpose of the Study

While there are many issues regarding online education, there seems to be a lack of research at the community college level with regards to issues addressed in this paper. For example, the examination of community college faculty and administrative concerns in particular has barely been addressed (e.g., Millirion & Miles, 2000, Roe, 2001; and Stocker 2001).

This shortage of literature leaves a void that is covered by anecdotal information as well as generalizations made from the literature at the university level (e.g., Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Erwin & Reippi, 1999; Fredericksen et al., 2000; and Hurlburt, 2001).

While many of these issues may be generalized, examination of these factors at the community college would allow for a more accurate picture of the two-year institution. By conducting a qualitative examination of the issues, a greater understanding of the concerns can be gained.

Method

Participants

Thirty-nine mid-western community college employees (33 faculty and 6 administration/staff members) and forty-eight students volunteered to participate (see Tables 1 and 2). Participants were targeted for participation due to his/her current involvement with online education.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Materials

Participants were asked demographic information (e.g., employment status and discipline) in addition to the main survey questions. Questions were developed based upon areas of faculty, administrative and student concerns (e.g., Betts, 1998; Fredericksen et al., 2000; Inman et al., 1999). The questions were open-ended in nature to not restrict participant responses (see Tables 2 and 3).

Insert Tables 2 & 3 About Here

Design and Procedure

Administrators and staff members at several community colleges were contacted about participation in the survey. Administrators/Staff were given the option of a face-to-face interview or completion of an e-mailed survey. In addition, these individuals were asked about access to faculty members for participation in this project. This demonstrates my use of the "snowball" sampling technique, where the interviewee supplied me with the names of other potential participants.

Faculty members were contacted via e-mail due to the volume of possible participants. Participants were given a two-week window for the completion and return of materials. In addition, randomly selected faculty were asked if their students could participate in the study. Students were surveyed using a quiz placed in the WebCT course shell of their class.

Results

Development and teaching online

The reasons for faculty development are varied in nature. It was seen that the desires of the faculty played a major role in course development (personal interest and perceived need for courses/accessibility). Another major influence, according to faculty, was the encouragement/pressure of administration. Factors such as faculty recognition of the emergence of online instruction and concerns about pressures from other institutions were other motivating issues (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 About Here

Technological and pedagogical support

Both faculty and staff discussed the availability of support services at their institution. Services provided include workshops, drop-in hours, and helpdesk support. While faculty found these services to be helpful, there was a small portion (9 percent) that stated that they did not have time to take advantage of the services that were provided.

Faculty compensation

To pay for the development of online courses, overload or reassignment time seemed to be most prevalent (see Table 5). In most cases, this was in an increment that was equal to the number of credit hours of the course. However at Riverside Community College, faculty members are able to apply for mini-grants to help cover the cost of developing the course.

There were several faculty members who were not compensated for the development of their courses. Some of the reasons that were presented included: a) part-time faculty are not compensated for course development; b) compensation was refused so ownership of course materials could be maintained; or c) there was no policy in place at the time the course was developed.

Insert Table 5 About Here

Pressure for development

According to the majority of faculty and administrators questioned, there is little to no pressure to develop online courses, while encouragement might be at hand (see Table 6). At one institution where online courses were not as prevalent, there was some to significant pressure for the development of courses. A confusing point was the mixed

message sent where some faculty were feeling increasing pressure while similar numbers felt that pressure was decreasing.

Insert Table 6 About Here

Use of multimedia

The use of multimedia in online courses was viewed as something that was a negative by faculty (see Table 7). Some of the reasons for this negative view included the time to develop the resources, copyright concerns, student download time and inadequate student support. Those individuals who used these resources said that it added to the course and provided a "rich class experience."

Insert Table 7 About Here

Teaching preference

When examining faculty preference about their preference of teaching in the traditional classroom versus online, results were split (see Table 8). Just slightly more faculty had no preference to those that preferred the classroom. Those participants that represented a preference to teaching online accounted for only 15 percent of respondents.

Insert Table 8 About Here

Perceived Student Learning

When students were asked to evaluate if they learned more online or in the classroom, there was balance in the responses (see Table 9). Only a slight majority (20 students) stated that they learned online. The reasons that students stated in favor of the online delivery method included being able to work when they were fresh and increased learning from everyone in the class.

Those who were in favor of the classroom setting (17 students) had equally powerful points for their preference. Several students said that they would learn more in a face-to-face classroom since there was not as much interaction with the instructor. Another popular reason classroom instruction was the "narrowing of what had to be studied." Students also mentioned that course expectations were not clearly spelled out by counselors so they were caught off guard by the format.

Insert Table 9 About Here

Student preparedness

Student preparedness seemed to draw spirited responses. Most participants believed that student were either no prepared or some were prepared for taking an online course (see Table 10). Participants mentioned poor student advisement by counselors, errors in student expectations, and a lack of student computer skills as major reasons for the shortcomings.

However, there were cases where students were mostly to totally prepared for online instruction. In these the course being taught (e.g., web design) or the information being provided to students played a factor in the participant's opinion.

Insert Table 10 About Here

Student opinions involving online learning

Students presented a wide range of positive and negative opinions regarding their online learning experience (see Tables 11 and 12). The flexibility of the courses, increased access to materials, and efficiency of the courses were prevalent themes in favorable student comments. In addition to this students also cited the ability to participate in classes where they could be open, without embarrassment as a favorable component of these courses.

However, there were a significant number of negative opinions toward online learning. Problems with being disciplined, technological difficulties (e.g., software and network difficulties), and a decrease of interaction with instructor and classmates were all cited as negatives in this format. It was seen that some of that some of these views were tied to the misconception of what these classes were and the skills and time required to complete them.

Insert Tables 11 & 12 About Here

Issues involving online

Faculty and administrators presented a wide variety of concerns about issues impacting online learning (see Table 13). The screening of prospective students, the quality of courses, and testing integrity were each major concerns. Other factors that were

addressed repeatedly were issues of student motivation, faculty compensation, network reliability, and student retention.

Insert Table 13 About Here

Continued online student enrollment

Student interest in taking future online courses can be viewed of as an indicator of their success (see Table 14). Students overwhelmingly stated that they would take another online course in the future. Many of the students stated that they had enrolled already for the next term for courses in this format. Reasons for this ran parallel to the favorable opinions stated previously (e.g., flexibility and access to materials). Those who were against or unsure of their continued status in this format gave reasons which mirrored the negative opinions previously echoed (e.g., technology problems and amount of discipline needed).

Insert Table 14 About Here

Discussion

This study shined some light on some familiar themes and provided direction for further examination. The reasons that faculty are interested in teaching online is varied, but it seems that personal interest as well as meeting college needs are the driving forces.

While there is satisfaction with support, there are concerns about training not being taken advantage of because of the times that it is being offered. To address this concern, institutions might want examine conducting training for online courses online or having face-to-face sessions augmented by online instruction (Ko & Rossen, 1998). This will not only provide faculty additional opportunities for participation in training, but it will give needed experience in the online format.

Reassignment time and overload seem to be the norm, but there is a need to address development of courses by part-time faculty. The amount of pressure seems to be minimal, though there seems to be pockets of encouragement and pressure. This seems to meet institutional desires for online degrees. Students do not seem to be prepared for online courses. Improper student expectations and lack of advisement seem to be some of the reasons for this. Multimedia is still in its infancy and is not being used for a variety of reasons. The most surprising factor was that the largest group of instructors had no preference in delivery format. While this the case, a major portion preferred the classroom for reasons of interaction.

Students are attracted to the online courses because of their flexibility and the potential benefits of a rich class discussion. However, students need to realize what these courses are. While some efforts to mimic the classroom experience are being undertaken, students need to be advised that there are differences. Students are demonstrating the faculty's fear that misconceptions exist when a student registers for a course, impacting their views from the start.

The issues impacting online are as varied as those being surveyed. Faculty members are concerned about the quality of courses and students as well as course integrity. Issues of reliability and technological skills are also a concern.

The literature has shown that while distance learning and online courses have a lot of potential, however, issues need to be addressed. The rush for colleges to be online have faculty trying to catch up with developing appropriate pedagogical approaches for this delivery format. If handled properly, this format can expand learning opportunities and the skills of those taking the courses. If faculty are allowed to take advantage of training opportunities at their own institution or those provided by state-wide organizations, such as the Illinois Online Network, not only will faculty have a broader understanding of the technology but be able to relate to those most important, the students.

Administrators have many issues to address in this changing time. Providing financial resources for training, materials, as well as faculty compensation, in a time when resources are scarce provides a challenge. In addition, there is the need for community college leaders to have a clear understanding of this medium. By doing this, they can understand, in part, what is needed and provide appropriate support.

The research, while limited, shows that students perform better while using the technology involved with online courses (e.g., Daugherty & Funke, 1998; Erwin & Reippi, 1999; and Hurlburt, 2001), but prefer the traditional setting over online (e.g., Davies & Mendenhall, 1998). This can hopefully be improved with faculty training and work with faculty and support personnel regarding instructional design. By this and making sure students are taking courses for the right reason, may result in both students and faculty being more satisfied and successful.

Based upon information gathered in this study, a follow-up project is going to be developed. This is going to include questions based upon topics raised in this pilot study, an examination of student retention and success in online courses as well as Roger's (1996) Diffusion theory.

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Table 1

Distribution of Participants Across Institutions*

	Participants		
Institution	Students	Faculty	Administration/Staff
New C.C.	27	9	1
Riverfront C.C.	0	0	2
Cornfield C.C.	0	2	1
Southern C.C.	0	7	1
Urban C.C.	21	11	1

*- Institution names changed for the purpose of data reporting.

Table 2

Questions Used in the Examination of Faculty/Staff Attitudes Toward Online Education

1. What led to your developing/teaching your online course(s)?
2. What level of technological and pedagogical support is there for online courses at your institution?
3. What compensation did you receive for developing online courses?
4. What pressure, if any, is placed upon faculty to develop online courses?
5. Do you feel that your students are prepared for online courses? Why or why not?
6. Do you utilize resources from the publisher (e.g., course packets for WebCT)? Why or why not?
7. Do you utilize multimedia resources (e.g., RealPlayer and QuickTime) in your courses? Why or why not?
8. Do you prefer teaching online or in the classroom? Why?
9. In your opinion, what is the biggest issue regarding online courses? Why is this?

Table 3

Questions Used in the Examination of Student Attitudes Toward Online Education

1. What do you like about online learning?
2. What do you dislike about online learning?
3. Do you feel that you learned more in an online environment? Why or why not?
4. In the future, would you take another online course? Why or why not?

Table 4

Reasons for Faculty Development and Teaching of Online Courses

Reasons for use	Number
Personal interest	8
Need for courses and accessibility	6
Administrative/College encouragement	5
Recognition of emerging role of online	4
Pressure from administration	3
Concerns about competition from other schools	2
Developed from supplemental course use	1
Did not develop the course	1
Other	3

Table 5

Methods of Compensation for Course Development

	Number	
Compensation for Development	Faculty	Administration/Staff
Overload/Reassignment time	22	3
No compensation	5	1
None for part-time faculty	4	0
Did not develop the course	2	0
Faculty Mini-Grant	0	2

Table 6

Level of Pressure Placed Upon Faculty to Develop Online Courses

	Number	
Pressure to Develop Online	Faculty	Administration/Staff
No pressure/Little pressure	13	2
Encouragement	7	3
Some pressure	4	1
Increasing pressure	3	0
Decreasing pressure	2	0
None for adjuncts	1	0
Significant pressure	1	0
No Answer	1	0

Table 7

Use of Multimedia in Online Courses

Use Of Multimedia	Number
No	25
Yes	8

Table 8

Faculty Preference In Teaching Format

Teaching Format Preference	Number
Both/No preference	14
Classroom	13
Online	5
No answer	1

Table 9

Better Perceived Student Learning by Environment

Preference	Number
Online	20
Face-to-Face	17
Same	11

Table 10

Perceived Level of Student Preparedness

	Number	
Level of Preparedness	Faculty	Administration/Staff
Not always prepared	20	4
Most are prepared	7	0
Definitely not prepared	5	1
Prepared	1	1

Table 11

Favorable Student Opinions Toward Online Learning

Opinions	Number
Flexibility	17
More efficient	7
Increased / open participation without embarrassment	6
Access to materials	6
Access to instructor	3
Ability to chat	1
None	1
No answer given	7

Table 12

Unfavorable Student Opinions Toward Online Learning

Opinions	Number
Problems with self-discipline/keeping on task	9
Problems with software	7
Displeasure toward lack of lecture/instructor time	6
None	4
Lack of ability to access a computer/internet	3
Lack of face-to-face interaction with classmates	3
Feeling that he/she is not learning	2
More work involved in the course	2
Time to complete tasks	2
Submitting assignments online	1
Lack of immediate feedback	1
Different methods for submitting materials across classes	1
No answer given	7

Table 13

Issues Impacting Online Instruction

	Number	
Issues Involving Instruction	Faculty	Administration/Staff
Screening prospective students	7	1
Quality of courses	5	0
Testing/Student Integrity	5	2
Student Motivation	3	0
Network reliability	3	0
Compensation/Workload of faculty	3	2
Student Retention	2	0
None	2	0
Loss of communication	2	0
Technical Skills	1	0
Role of online learning	0	1

Table 14

Student Interest in Future Online Course Enrollment

Future Online Enrollment	Number
Yes	40
No	4
Maybe	4

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